



## 25 YOUTH BASEBALL PRACTICE PLANS

- Perfect for 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade baseball teams. A full season of practices planned.
- Includes agendas and teaching points for twenty-five, 90-minute practices and twenty-five, 10-minute, pre-practice meetings. Don't wing it — be ready for every practice & pre-practice meeting.
- Your players will be prepared for the first game and engaged throughout the season. Make the best use of your time together.
- A roadmap for beginning coaches and a time-saver for expert coaches. You'll have more fun by being well prepared!

**John Blissenbach**



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# PRACTICE THREE — THROWING & FIELDING

## Pre-Practice Meeting: 15 Minutes

This will be the first full-squad practice so you will need to repeat some things from the pitcher/catcher pre-practice meeting.

### Get your players talking

- Let's introduce ourselves. Please introduce yourself by giving your name, school, and favorite thing about baseball and favorite thing outside of baseball.

### Coach's Comments

- Practice guidelines:
  - Bring glove, spikes and water bottle to every practice.
  - If you're thirsty, need a break, or not feeling well, let me know.
  - We'll be meeting 10 minutes prior to our actual practice time, to go over some points that don't require the field. I start on time, so please be prompt.
  - When I call the group together during practice, please come immediately. Be an active listener: Eyes should focus on whoever is talking so that they know you're paying attention, mouths should be closed and ears should be wide open so you can understand everything being discussed.
  - Most of today's practice will be devoted to the fundamentals of fielding ground balls & fly balls. We will focus on using the right technique each time you field a ball. All of the drills today will be fast-moving so that each of you will get lots of practice. We will also introduce you to the fundamentals of hitting and then have you rotate through three batting stations. Each of you should get many chances to work on your swing.
  - All of the things you do today you will also be able to work on at home with a parent, a friend or a sibling. The more you practice these fundamentals, the better fielder & hitter you will become.
  - We will be covering a lot of things that may be new to you. If there is anything you do not understand please stop us and ask us to review it again.
  - We want each practice to be fun, fast-moving & loaded with baseball fundamentals. Let's play hard, work hard & be ready to learn.

**Conclusion:** Many other teams will be practicing the same types of things that we'll be practicing. The difference will be how we do it. Doing little things correctly can make a big difference. Let's do the little things right.

## PRACTICE PLAN #3 — THROWING & FIELDING

90 MIN	ACTIVITY	NOTES
<b>10</b> minutes	<b>Warm-up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arm circles &amp; stretches. Leg stretches</li> <li>• Light jogging, 200-400 feet</li> <li>• Short &amp; long toss. Demonstrate fundamentals of playing catch starting with short toss (15 feet) ending with long toss (100 – 250 feet)</li> </ul>	The purpose of early season warm-ups is to slowly build-up arm strength. Focus on technique & fundamentals. It will take several practices to build up speed, accuracy & throwing distance
<b>10</b> minutes	<b>Ground Ball Fundamentals:</b> Have players pick a partner and create two lines with players facing each other. Lines should be about six feet apart with six feet between players in each line. Each set of players will have a ball. Players should put gloves behind them. Player without ball should be in a fielding position; head up, butt low, arms in front of body & extended, hands out front with palms pointed out. Player with ball rolls it on the ground to teammate. Player fielding ball drops hands to ground. Hands should be extended in front of the body forming the mouth of an alligator. Bottom hand is glove hand and should touch the ground. Top hand should touch bottom hand at the wrist. Fingers should form an open mouth to receive ball. Players should alternate rolling the ball to each other, directly between players legs and then to each side. Players should shuffle feet side to side for balls thrown to their left & right. Objective is to field ball between legs. Drill should now be repeated with players using their gloves. Players should be reminded to keep fingers of glove touching the ground with throwing hand on top forming the mouth of all alligator.	Teaching point: It is important for players to learn proper positioning of legs, feet, arms & hands for fielding grounders. Repetition of drills with & without the use of gloves will improve skill level.
<b>15</b> minutes	<b>Fielding Ground Balls:</b> <b>Part 1:</b> Players should form two lines, one along the first base line & the other along the third base line. An empty bucket should be placed on third base & on first base. Coach will be at home with a bucket of balls. Coach will hit balls to players in each line in rapid fashion. Players will field the ball and drop it in a bucket. Focus should be on a proper ready position & proper positioning of hands & head while fielding the ball. Players should also “round to the ball” so that feet and body are in position to make a throw. <b>Part 2:</b> Players should form a single line along third base. Two players should alternate playing first base. An empty bucket should be placed near first base. In rapid fashion hit grounders to players in line. Players will catch the ball & throw to players at first base. First baseman should drop ball in bucket after catching it. Have players focus on rounding to the ball and getting feet set before making throw. Make sure each player gets multiple fielding chances & then rotate two players to play first base. <b>*****WATER BREAK*****</b>	This is a rapid fire drill. Every player should get multiple chances to field grounders during drill, Focus more on proper technique than whether the ball is caught. When players are in the ready position, pocket of glove should be pointed at hitter. Palm of throwing hand should also point at hitter....hands should not be on knees.

<p>15 minutes</p>	<p><b>Fielding Fly Balls (Thrown by Coach):</b>  <b>Part 1 - Fly Ball in Front or Directly At Player:</b> Players should divide into two groups, one in right field &amp; the other in left field with an empty bucket. One coach with a bucket of balls should be with each group. Demonstrate how to catch fly ball hit directly at player, with glove slightly higher than eyes and fingers pointed up. Thumbs on glove hand and throwing hand should touch. When catching the ball, the foot on the glove side of body should be closer to home plate than other foot. This places feet in the right position for the throw. Coach should stand about 25 feet away from players and throw each a fly ball directly in front of them. After catching the ball, player should place ball in bucket. Repeat with throws to the right &amp; left sides of each player. Each players should field multiple throws  <b>Part 2 - Fly Ball Over Players Head:</b> Ball should now be thrown over each players head. In order to catch the ball, player will quickly need to judge flight of ball and run to the spot the ball will land. For balls thrown to player's right side, player will need to turn body to the right while taking first step back with right foot. For balls thrown to the left side, player will need to turn body to the left while taking first step back with left foot. For balls thrown directly over head, players may step back with either foot and slightly "circle" to the ball rather than running straight back. While running, glove should be at side rather than held above head. Each player should field multiple throws.</p>	<p>Teaching Points:  Players should not back pedal to catch balls thrown over head. A step back followed by a sprint to the ball is the proper technique.  No throws are needed in this drill, Throwing will be part of practice devoted to defensive situations.</p>
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p><b>Fielding Fly Balls (Hit by Coach):</b>  <b>Part 1 - Fly Ball in Front or Directly At Player:</b> Players should divide into three groups, one in right, center &amp; left field, each with an empty bucket. One coach with a bucket of balls should hit from a spot on the infield. Coach should hit balls in front or directly at players. Each player should field multiple hits and place ball in empty bucket.  <b>Part 2 - Fly Ball Over Players Head:</b> Ball should now be hit over each players head. In order to catch the ball, player will quickly need to judge flight of ball and run to the spot the ball will land. Each player should field multiple hits.  *****WATER BREAK*****</p>	<p>The goal with both of these drills in to provide each player with multiple chances to field the ball. Both should be done in rapid fashion to increase the number of chances per player.</p>
<p>5 minutes</p>	<p><b>Hitting Fundamentals:</b> Before dividing players into multiple hitting stations, conduct a brief demonstration of the fundamentals of hitting. Demonstration should focus on gripping the bat, stance, stride, turning hips and back foot, moving chin from front to back shoulder while swinging, and the importance of a short, compact swing. Hour and hours could be spent on discussing the finer points of hitting. Cover the key points in your demonstration and then provide more instruction to each hitter as you watch them at multiple hitting stations.</p>	
<p>20 minutes</p>	<p><b>Hitting Stations:</b> Set up as many stations as possible depending on the equipment and facilities available to your team. A good start would be to have the following three stations and equally divide your team across each station &amp; rotate after a few minutes at each:  1. Batting tee (or any other type of hitting tool) - Set a tee/other tool up in front of a net or screen.  2. Soft toss - Have a player toss balls underhanded to a hitter in front of a net or screen.  3. Live hitting - Have coach pitch to players in a batting cage or on the field, If using the field, recruit parents to shag balls. Try not to have players shag balls. This is batting, not fielding practice.</p>	<p>The objective of hitting stations is to get as many players swinging a bat at the same time as you can. The more cuts each player can get, the better hitter they will become. Head coach should roam among all stations providing individual instruction as needed.</p>